

# About the Selection Process



# Success Profiles

The Civil Service recruits using Success Profiles.

This means for each role we advertise, we consider what you will need to demonstrate in order to be successful.

This gives us the best possible chance of finding the right person for the job, drives up performance and improves diversity and inclusivity.

Not all of the elements are relevant to every role, and will vary depending on the profession, level and type of role. Details of which elements will be assessed and how we will assess you against these, are included in the job description.



The full framework is available online at the following link:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/success-profiles>

# The Selection Process

The Probation Services Officer selection process consists of 4 stages:

- Stage 1 application form – the application form assesses behaviours, experience and technical elements of Success Profiles
- Stage 2 written assessment – during the written assessment candidates are required to produce a report. The written assessment will assess the behaviours element of Success Profiles
- Stage 3 interview – interviews will be conducted virtually through Microsoft Teams, the interview will assess behaviours, strengths and experience elements of Success Profiles
- Stage 4 core skills assessment – the core skills assessment assesses your suitability to deliver Programmes. The assessment will be conducted face to face

## Your Application – Key Points

The application form is your first opportunity to say why you'd be the best person for the job.

It is a competition so you really need to ensure that you give your best and strongest examples to reflect what the post requires.

Make it as easy as possible for the recruitment panel to assess your suitability for the job. This means thinking about the relevance of your examples and how you set them out in your application form.

# Preparing Your Examples

The specific behaviours you need to write about will be detailed in the job advert.

Before you start to write your examples you should read all of the information in the job advert and any supporting documents, paying particular attention to the behaviours required. Make sure you have a full copy of the [Civil Service Behaviours Framework](#).

You may wish to use examples from your career, education or voluntary work. Your evidence must be truthful and describe real examples of what happened and how your actions led to or contributed to the outcome.

Think of examples that:

- clearly demonstrate the relevant behaviours at the grade to which you are applying
- will allow you to explain in depth what you personally did and how you did it
- had a positive outcome
- impacted on more than a few people, as these are likely to be more powerful
- allow you to demonstrate other key skills relevant to the role for which you are applying.

## Writing Your Behaviour Examples

When completing your application form you are asked to describe a particular situation from the past where you displayed all or most of the activities making up a particular behaviour. You can use up to a maximum of 250 words to describe what you did, how you did it, why you did it and the effect this had. This shows the assessors who will be marking the form that you understand what is required and that you are capable of doing it.

By quoting examples of why and how you demonstrated the relevant skills, knowledge and behaviours in the past, you show that you have the potential to apply them in a new job in the future.

It is not enough to say that you have had relevant experience; you must show evidence of making a success of that experience by describing how you acted in a particular situation and the impact your actions had.

Use an example that is at, or above, the level of the job you are applying for.

There is little point demonstrating you can do Band 2 work if you are applying for a Band 3 job.

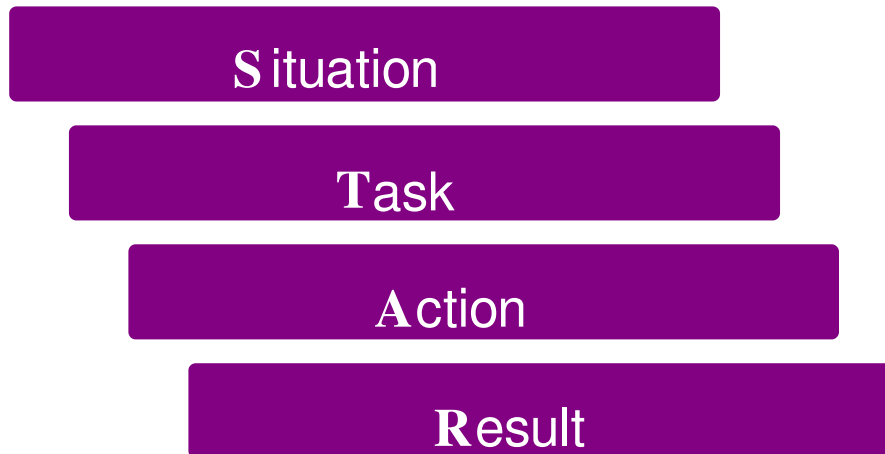
A good behaviours example requires more than just an outline of what you did in a given scenario, it requires you to explain what you did, how you did it, and why.

# Writing Your Behaviour Examples

## Using the STAR method

Within the Civil Service the most common approach to writing behaviours examples is the **STAR** method. This approach will help you to structure your statements and to break down the writing of a 250 word example into four manageable chunks.

The star method suggests that examples are broken down as follows:



# Writing Your Behaviour Examples

## Situation

**Briefly** describe the situation you were in. This sets your example up for the sifter and provides the context for the actions you are going to describe.

You should describe a specific event or situation, and not a general overview of your role responsibilities or of what you have done in the past.

It needs to be fairly short (a sentence or two), as the information given here is not as important to your score as the actions that were taken to address the problem and achieve a successful outcome.

## Task

This is where you describe your role or what you were trying to achieve within the situation described.

If your example relates to a team task or project then say so, but focus on your own role and your own contribution, as this is what you are being assessed on. Again, this should be fairly short – ideally a sentence or two, in order to allow you to focus the majority of your word allowance on your actions and the results you achieved.



# Writing Your Behaviours Examples

## Action

This is where you will describe what you actually did in response to the situation and task, how you did it, and why. Use “**I**” rather than “**we**” when outlining the actions taken, as the sifter is assessing **your** actions, not those of the team. This is the most important part of your example, as it is where most of the sift points are awarded – the majority of your word count should be used here.

## Result

At the end of your example you will need to briefly explain what the outcome of your actions was.

How was success measured?

Where possible show measurable benefits or improvements. Showing in your example that you have understood how your actions contributed to Business or Organisational objectives or targets adds impact. This could make your statement stronger than someone else’s and help you to be more successful in the sift.

## How Your Behaviours Statements Will Be Assessed

Assessors will compare the statements in your example against the descriptors for the relevant behaviour, to see if and how well they show evidence of these. The rating scale for the Behaviours element of Success Profiles is 1-7. Benchmarks will be set by the recruitment panel at the start of each process, with a minimum score of 4 (Acceptable Demonstration) usually required for each behaviour to achieve a pass.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not Demonstrated	Minimal Demonstration	Moderate Demonstration	Acceptable Demonstration	Good Demonstration	Strong Demonstration	Outstanding Demonstration

## Disability Confident Scheme (formerly Guaranteed Interview Scheme)

We are an accredited user of the Government's "Disability Confident" disability symbol, which denotes organisations that have a positive attitude towards disabled applicants.

Applicants who meet the minimum (i.e. essential) criteria in the job specification are guaranteed an interview. Selection will be on merit.

If you wish to apply for consideration under this scheme, please indicate in the relevant section of your application.

It is not necessary to state the nature of your disability.



# The Written Assessment

The Written Assessment will enable you to demonstrate your competence in a number of Behaviours relevant to the Probation Service Officer role.

You will be asked to produce a report on a topic given to you in your assessment.

The assessment will be completed virtually under test conditions so you will need to ensure you have technology available that has a camera function and enables you to open and write into Microsoft Word documents. You will be given 60 minutes to complete the whole assessment.

The exercise has been designed to ensure there is no one 'right' approach to the exercise. We do not expect you to understand all the processes and procedures involved in being a Probation Service Officer, and we are not assessing your knowledge in this regard. We are interested in your natural responses to the issues presented and are keen to see how you respond to the information you are given.

# The Interview

Interviews are generally blended, this means they will include experience, behaviour and strengths questions.

Strengths are the things we do regularly, do well and that motivate us.

When looking at your strengths, we want to find out whether you and the organisation or job role are a good fit. By ensuring that the role is the right fit for you, you are more likely to enjoy it and perform well.

There are three elements which determine whether something is a strength:

- **Performance:** you can perform an activity/behaviour to a high level of capability or proficiency.
- **Engagement:** you feel motivated, enthused and empowered when doing the activity.
- **Use:** you do the activity regularly and as often as possible.

The full framework is available online at the following link:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/success-profiles>

# The Interview

You need to prepare well for a good interview.

The interview will be based on the elements that were defined in the vacancy advertisement and will last approximately 45 minutes to an hour.

Don't be put off by the panel taking notes. It's important that they make a record of your answers so that they are able to score you at the end of the interview and provide feedback at the end of the process. This feedback will be provided via the Civil Service Jobsite.

The interview, combined with any other selection activity, will inform the panel which candidate is right for the job based on their merit. The job will be offered to the person who would do it best.

# The Core Skills Assessment

The purpose of the Core Skills assessment is to assess your suitability to become an Accredited Programmes Facilitator.

This assessment process is designed to be both rigorous and consistent in its application and accessible and fair to all.

The assessment will consist of two activities:

- A facilitation exercise with some follow up questions
- An interview relating to the role of a facilitator

To prepare for your assessment centre you will be given a minimum of **10 working days** between being invited to attend and the date of the assessment.

## Reserve Lists

- The Probation Service reserves the right to create a reserve list where a competition identifies more appointable candidates than there are available vacancies.
- Any reserve lists may be used for up to 12 months to fill the same role or other similar roles with the same essential criteria without further testing of merit.
- If you are eligible for inclusion on a reserve list, you will receive an e-mail to that effect at the end of the process, containing further information on the conditions of the list.



# Security Clearance

All new recruits to the department must meet certain security standards. All offers of employment are conditional on successful completion of security clearance.

The following conditions will affect your security clearance and therefore may affect your eligibility for our vacancies:

- Criminal record: If you have criminal records
- Nationality and Immigration status: Particularly relevant if there are specific nationality and residency requirements for the advertised role.
- Address History: If you have lived at numerous addresses in the UK in the last 5 years.
- Lived outside UK: You should have been resident in the United Kingdom for the last 3 years and for 5 years or more for higher security roles.
- Employment History: If you have had multiple employers in the last 5 years.
- Credit Reference Check: If there any financial concerns that could lead to potential vulnerability. The credit reference check is made to assess the financial state of the individual being vetted.
- Others factors: Associated with, or have or lived in areas associated with organisations seeking to disrupt the government or have family who have associated with, organisations and/or individuals known to security services e.g. Northern Ireland.

## Additional Advice

If you are unsure about any part of the process or require additional information about the post to enable you to progress your application you should, in the first instance, contact the named person on the vacancy advertisement as this is most likely to be the vacancy manager. However, you can also direct your questions to Human Resources Recruitment Team at [Moj-recruitment-vetting-enquiries@gov.sscl.com](mailto:Moj-recruitment-vetting-enquiries@gov.sscl.com).

**We look forward to your application and good luck!**

